

## **SO: 581 World System Perspectives**

### **Unit-1 Historical Contexts of World System Perspectives**

#### **1.1 Immanuel Wallenstein: The Modern World System**

##### **On the Study of Social Change Pp. 3-11**

Change is eternal. Nothing ever changes. Both clichés are "true." Structures are those coral reefs of human relations which have a stable existence over relatively long periods of time. But structures too are born, develop & die. Unless we are to use the study of social change as a term synonymous to the totality of social science, its meaning should be restricted to the study of changes in those phenomena which are most durable the definition of durability itself being of course subject to change over historical time and place. One of the major assertions of world social science is that there are some great watersheds in the history of man. One such generally recognized watershed, though one however studied by only a minority of social scientists, is the so-called Neolithic or agricultural revolution. The other great watershed is the creation of the modern world.

This latter event is at the center of most contemporary social science theory, and indeed, of the nineteenth century as well. To be sure, there is immense debate as to what are the defining characteristics of modern times. Furthermore, there is much disagreement about the motors of this process of change. But there seems to be widespread consensus that some great structural changes did occur in the world in the last several hundred years, changes that make the world of today qualitatively different from the world of yesterday. Even those who reject evolutionist assumptions of, determinate progress nonetheless admit the difference in structures.

What are the appropriate units to study if one wishes to describe this "difference" & account for it? In a sense, many of the major theoretical debates of our time can be reduced to arguments about this. It is the great quest of contemporary social science. It is therefore appropriate to begin a work that purports to analyze the process of social change in the modern world with an intellectual itinerary of one's conceptual search.

I started with an interest in the social underpinnings of political conflict in my own society. I thought that by comprehending the modalities of such conflict, I might contribute as a rational man to the shaping of that society. 'This led me into two great debates. One was the degree to which "all history is the history of the class struggle." Phrased another way, are classes the only significant operating units in the social & political arenas? Or, as Weber argued, are they only one of a trinity of units class, status group, and party which exist, the interactions among which explain the political process? Although I had my prejudices on the subject, I found, like others before me, that neither the definition of these terms nor the description of their relations was easy to elucidate. I felt increasingly that this was far more a conceptual than an empirical problem & that to resolve the debate, at least in my own grind, would have to place the issues within a larger intellectual context.

The second great debate, which was linked to the first, was about the degree to which there could or did exist a consensus of within a given society & to the extent that such a consensus existed, the degree to which its presence or absence was in fact a major determinant of men's actions. This debate is linked to the first because it is only if one rejects is the primordial character of social struggle in civil society that the question can even be raised.

Values are of course an elusive thing to observe & I became very uneasy with a great deal of the theorizing about values, which scouted often to combine the absence of a rigorous empirical base with an affront to common sense. Still it was clear that men and groups did justify their actions by reference to ideologies. Furthermore, it seemed clear also that groups became more coherent and hence more politically efficacious to the extent that they were self-conscious, which meant that they developed a common language and a Weltanschauung.

I shifted my area of empirical concern from my own society to Africa in the hope either that I would discover various theories confirmed by what I found there or that a look at distant climes would sharpen my perception by directing my attention to issues I would otherwise have missed. I expected the former to happen. But it was the latter that came to pass.

I went to Africa first during the colonial era, and I witnessed the process of "decolonization." and then of the independence of a cascade of sovereign states. White man that I was, I was bombarded by the onslaught of the colonial mentality of Europeans long resident in Africa. Arid sympathized of nationalist movements that I was; I was privy to the angry analyses and optimistic passions of young militants of the African movements. It did not take long to realize that not only were these two groups at odds on political issues, but that they approached the situation with entirely different sets of conceptual frameworks.

In general, in a deep conflict, the eyes of the downtrodden are more acute about the reality of the present. For it is in their interest to perceive correctly in order to expose the hypocrisies of the rulers. They have less interest in ideological deflection. So it was in this case. The nationalists saw the reality in "rich they lived as a "colonial situation," that is, one in which both their social action and that Of the Europeans living side by side with them as administrators, missionaries, teachers, & merchants were determined by the constraints of a single legal & social entity. They saw further that the political machinery was based on a caste system in which rank and hence reward was accorded on the basis of race.

African nationalists were determined to change the political structures within which they lived. I have told this story elsewhere & it is not relevant to refer to it here. What is relevant here is that I thereby became aware of the degree to which society as an abstraction was heavily limited to politico-judicial systems as an empirical reality. It was a false perspective to take a unit like a "tribe" ailed seek to analyze its operations without reference to the fact that, in a colonial situation. the ,governing institutions of" a "If far from being "sovereign," were closely circumscribed by file laws (and which they were an indissociable part, the colony. Indeed this led me to the larger generalization that the study of social organization was by and large defective because of the widespread lack of consideration of the legal & political framework within which both organizations and their members operated.

I sought to discover the general attributes of a colonial situation and to describe what I thought of as its "natural history." It quickly became clear to me that I had to hold at least some factors of the world-system constant. So I restricted myself to an analysis of how the colonial system operated for those countries which were colonies in the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century's of European powers and which were "overseas possessions" of these powers. Given this constant, I felt I could make generally applicable statements about the impact on social life of the imposition of colonial authority, the motives & modalities of resistance to this authority, the mechanisms by which colonial powers entrenched & sought. To legitimate their power, the contradictory nature of the forces that were able to operate within this framework, the reasons

why men were led to form organizations that challenged colonial rule & the structural elements that made for the expansion & eventual political triumph of anticolonial movements. The unit of analysis in all of this was the colonial territory as legally defined by the administering power. I was interested equally in what happened to these "new states" after independence. As the study of colonial territories seemed to focus on the causes of the breakdown of existing political order, the study of the postindependence period seemed to focus on the opposite issue: How legitimate authority is established and a sense of membership in the national entity spread among the citizenry.

This latter study ran into problems, however. In the first place, to study the postindependence politics of Afro-Asian states seemed to be a process of running after file headlines. There could therefore be relatively little historical depth. Furthermore, there was the tricky question of Latin America. There were many ways in which the situations there seemed parallel and more and more people began to think of the three continents as a "Third World." But Latin American countries had been politically independent for 150 years. Their cultures were far more closely linked with the European tradition than anything in Africa or Asia. The whole enterprise seemed to be wavering on very shaky ground.

In search for an appropriate unit of analysis, I turned to "states in the period after formal independence but before they had achieved something that might be termed national integration." This definition could be taken to include most or all of Latin America for all or almost all of the time up to the present. But it obviously included other areas as well. It included for example the United States of America, at least in the period before say the Civil War. It surely included Eastern Europe, at least up until the twentieth century and possibly up to the present. And it even included western and southern Europe, at least for earlier periods of time.

I was therefore forced by this logic to turn my attention to early modern Europe. This led me first into the question of what I would take as the starting point of this process, a process I provisionally formulated, for want of a better conceptual tool, as the process of modernization. Furthermore, I had not only to consider the issue of starting points but of terminal points, unless I wished to include twentieth-century Britain or Germany as instances of this same social process. Since that seemed *prima facie* dubious, terminal points had to be thought about.

At this point, I was clearly involved in a developmental schema and some implicit notion of stages of development. This in turn posed two problems: criteria for determining stages, and comparability of units across historical time. How many stages had there been? How many could there be? Is industrialization a turning point or the consequence of some political turning point? What in this context would the empirical meaning of a term like "revolution" mean, as in the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution? Were these stages unilinear or could a unit go "backward"? This seemed to be a vast conceptual morass into which I had stepped.

Furthermore, getting out of the conceptual morass was very difficult because of the absence of reasonable measuring instruments. How could one say that seventeenth-century France was in some sense equivalent to twentieth-century India? Laymen might consider such a statement absurd. Were they so wrong? It was all very well to fall back on textbook formulae of the virtues of scientific abstraction, but the practical difficulties of comparison seemed immense.

One way to handle the "absurd" idea of comparing two such disparate units was to accept the legitimacy of the objection and add another variable the world context of any given era, or what Wolfram Eberhard has called "world time." This meant that while seventeenth-century France might have shared some structural characteristics with twentieth-century India, they were to be seen as very different on the dimensions of world context. This was conceptually clarifying, but made measurement even more complicated.

Finally, (here seemed to be another difficulty. If given societies went through "stages," that is, had a "natural history," what of the world-system itself? Did it not have "stages," or at least a "natural history"? If so, were we not studying evolutions within evolutions? And if that, was not the theory getting to him top-heavy in epicycles? Did it not call for some simplifying thrust?

It seemed to me it did. It was at this point that I abandoned the idea altogether of taking either the sovereign state or that vaguer concept, the national society, as the unit of analysis. I decided that neither one was a social system nor that one could only speak of social change in social systems. The only social system in this scheme was the world-system.

This was of course enormously simplifying. I had one type of unit rather than units within units. I could explain changes in the sovereign states as consequent upon the evolution and interaction of the world-system. But it was also enormously complicating. I probably only had one instance of this unit in the modern era. Suppose indeed that I was right, that the correct unit of analysis was the world-system, and that sovereign states were to be seen as one kind of organizational structure among others within this single social system. Could I then do anything more than write its history?

I was not interested in writing its history, nor did I begin to have the empirical knowledge necessary for such a task. But can there be laws about the unique? In a rigorous sense, there of course cannot be. A statement of causality or probability is made in terms of a series of like phenomena or like instances. Even if one were to include in such a series those that would probably or even possibly occur in the future, what could be proposed here was not to add a series of future possible instances to a network of present and past ones. It was to add a series of future possible instances to a single past-present one.

There had only been one "modern world." May be one day there would be discovered to be comparable phenomena on other planets, or additional modern world-systems on this one. But here and now, the reality was clear—only one. It was here that I was inspired by the analogy with astronomy which purports to explain the laws governing the universe, although (as far as we know) only one universe has ever existed.

This kind of project is manageable to the extent that a good deal of empirical material exists, and that this material is at least partially in the I'm in of contrapuntal controversial work. Fortunately this seems to be the case by now for a large number of the themes of modern history.

One of the major thrusts of modern social science has been the effort to most achieve quantification of research findings. Utilizing the heavily narrative accounts of most historical research seems not to lend itself to such quantification. What then is the reliability of such data, and to what extent can one safely draw conclusions from the material about the

operation of a system as such? It is a major tragedy of twentieth-century social science that so large a proportion of social scientists, facing this dilemma, have thrown in the sponge. Historical data seemed to them vague and crude, hence unreliable. They felt that there was little to be done about it, and that hence it was best to avoid using it. And the best way not to use it was to formulate problems in such a way that its use was not indicated.

Thus the quantifiability of data determined the choice of research problems which then determined the conceptual apparatuses with which one defined and handled the empirical data. It should be clear on a moment's reflection that this is an inversion of the scientific process. Conceptualization should determine research tools, at least most of the time, not vice versa. The degree of quantification should reflect merely the maximum of precision that is possible for given problems and given methods at given points of time. More rather than less quantification is always desirable, to the extent that it speaks to the questions which derive from the conceptual exercise. At this stage of analysis of the world-system, the degree of quantification achieved and immediately realizable is limited. We do the best we can and go forward from there.

Lastly, there is the question of objectivity and commitment. I do not believe there exists any social science that is not committed that does not mean however that it is not possible to be objective. It is first of all a matter of defining clearly our terms. In the nineteenth century, in rebellion against the, fairy-tale overtones of so much prior historical writing, we were given the ideal of telling history wee as eigentlich geese. But social reality is ephemeral. It exists in the present and disappears as it moves into the past. The past can only be told as it truly is, not was. For recounting the past is a social act of the present done by men of the present and affecting the social system of the present.

"Truth" changes because society changes. At any given time, nothing is successive; everything is contemporaneous, even that which is past. And in the present we are all irremediably the products of our background, our training, our personality and social role & the structured pressures within which we operate. That is not to say there are no options. Quite the contrary. A social system & all its constituent institutions, including the sovereign states of the modern world, are the loci of a wide range of social groups--in contact, in collusion, and above all, in conflict with each other. Since we all belong to multiple groups, we often have to make decisions as to the priorities demanded by our loyalties. Scholars & scientists are not somehow exempt from this requirement. Nor is the requirement limited to their nonscholarly, directly political roles in the social system:

To be sure, to lie a scholar or a scientist is to perform a particular role in the social system, one quite different from being an apologist for any particular group. I am not denigrating the role of advocate. It is essential and honorable, but not the same as that of scholar or scientist. The latter's role is to discern, within the framework of his commitments, the present reality of the phenomena he studies, to derive from this study general principles, from which ultimately particular applications may be made. In this sense, there is no area of study that is not "relevant-" For the proper understanding of the social dynamics of the present requires a theoretical comprehension that can only be based on the study of the widest possible range of phenomena, including through all of historical time and space.

When I say the "present reality" of phenomena, I do not mean that in order to strengthen the political claims of a government, an archaeologist for example should assert that the

artifacts he uncovers belong to one group when he in fact believes them to belong to another. I mean that the whole archaeological enterprise from its inception the social investment in this branch of scientific activity, the research orientation, the conceptual tools, the modes of resuming and communicating the results are functions of the social present. To think otherwise is self-deceptive at best. Objectivity is honesty within this framework. Objectivity is a function of the whole social system. Insofar as the system is lopsided, concentrating certain kinds of research activity in the hands of particular groups, the results will be "biased" in favor of these groups. Objectivity is the vector of a distribution of social investment in such activity such that it is performed by persons rooted in all the major groups of the world-system in a balanced fashion. Given this definition, we do not have an objective social science today. On the other hand, it is not an unfeasible objective within the foreseeable future.

We have already suggested that the study of world-systems is particularly tricky because of the impossibility possibility of finding comparable instances. It is also particularly tricky because the social impact of statements about the world-system is clearly and immediately evident to all major actors in the political arena. Hence the social pressures on scholars and scientists, in the form of relatively tight social control on their activities, are particularly great in this field. This affords one further explanation to that of the methodological dilemmas for the reluctance of scholars to pursue activities in this domain.

But conversely this is the very reason why it is important to do so. Man's ability to participate intelligently in the evolution of his own system is dependent on his ability to perceive the whole. The more difficult we acknowledge the task to be; the more urgent it is that we start sooner rather than later. It is of course not in the interest of all groups that this be done. Here our commitment enters. It depends on our image of the good society. To the extent that we want a more egalitarian world and a more libertarian one, we must comprehend the conditions under which these states of being are realizable. To do that requires first of all a clear exposition of the nature & evolution of the modern world-system heretofore & the range of possible developments in the present & the future. That kind of knowledge would be power. And within the framework of my commitments, its, it would be a power that would be most useful to those groups which represent the interests of the larger and more oppressed parts of the world's population.

Much of contemporary social science has become the study of groups & organizations, when it has not been social psychology in disguise. This Work, however, involves not the study of groups, but of social systems. When, one studies a social system, the classical lines of division within social science are meaningless. Anthropology, economics, political science, sociology & history are divisions of the discipline anchored in a certain liberal conception of the state and its relation to functional and geographical sectors of the social order. They make a certain limited sense if the focus of one's study is organizations. They make none at all if the focus is the Social system. I am not calling for a multidisciplinary approach to the study of social systems, but for a unidisciplinary approach. The substantive content of this book will, I hope, make it clear what I mean by this phrase, and how seriously I take it.

## 1.2 Globalization & the Sociology of Immanuel Wallerstein: A Critical Appraisal (2011) Pp.1-23

### William I. Robinson

By the term of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the concept of globalization had earned its place in the social sciences & debate turned more squarely to the theoretical significance of globalization. Yet not all scholars were happy with the notion of globalization. Some claim that is merely a new name for earlier theories & concepts. Among those who reject new paradigmatic thinking on the current age is Immanuel Wallenstein, the world renowned sociologist & further of the world system paradigm. This article is intended as an appraisal of Wallenstein's in the context of the debate on global transformations in the 20<sup>th</sup> & early 21<sup>st</sup> century & from the vantage point of the present author's own critical globalization perspective. The first three parts summarize & assess Wallerstein's theoretical system & his many contributions to macro historical & comparative sociology to development studies & international political economy. The fourth discusses Wallerstein's assessment of the evolution of the world capitalist system in recent decade including his views on the concept of globalization & the fifth focuses on earlier & more recent critical appraisals of his work including the present author's own in light of the recent transformations in world capitalism identified with globalization.

### **keywords**

Development, globalization, history of sociology, social change, sociological theory.

Most world agree that if we are to understand the 21<sup>st</sup> century social world we must come to grips with the concept of globalization. The term first becomes popularized in the 1980s. The 1990s saw raging debates on the usefulness of the concept for the social sciences & humanities. By the new century the concept had clearly earned its place & debate turned more squarely to the theoretical significance of globalization. Yet not all scholars are happy with the notion of globalization. Some claim that is it old wine poured into a new bottle, merely a new name for earlier theorists & concepts. Certainly the world has experienced dramatic changes since Immanuel Wallenstein published in 1974 the first volume in his seminal trilogy, *The Modern World System*. But not all believe that these changes signal any sort of qualitative transformation in the system of world capitalism that merits new theoretical claims.

Among those who reject new paradigmatic thinking on the current age is Immanuel Wallerstein, one of the most renowned sociologists and who is identified as the 'father' of the world-system paradigm. This article is intended as an appraisal of Wallerstein's oeuvre in the context of the debate on global transformations in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. What is the explanatory purchase of this oeuvre to our understanding of contemporary 21<sup>st</sup>-century world affairs, specifically, to systemic level transformations coming into focus one decade into the new century? The first three parts summarize Wallstein's theoretical system and his many contributions to macro, historical and comparative sociology, to development studies & international political economy, and assess these contributions from what I have termed a critical globalization perspective (Robinson, 2008). The fourth discusses Wallerstein's assessment of evolution of the world capitalist system in recent decades, including his views on the concept of globalization, and the fifth section focuses on earlier and more recent critical appraisals of his work, including my own, in light of the recent transformations in world capitalism identified with globalization.

## Reinvigorating historical sociology

Some see the world-systems paradigm as a 'precursor' to globalization theories (Waters, 2001). World-system theory, however, started out not as a theory of globalization but of development. In the late 1950s, the field of development was dominated by the modernization school, which came under attack by dependency theories & other radical Third World approaches to international inequalities. By the late 1970s, world-system theory had become established as an alternative perspective from which to examine issues of development and world inequalities. Wallerstein's colleague the late Giovanni Arrighi observed that 'world-systems analysis as a distinctive sociological paradigm emerged at least 15 years before the use of globalization as a signifier that blazed across the headlines & exploded as a subject of academic research and publication' (Arrighi, 2005). The paradigm did indeed come of age in the 1970s & 1980s. Yet what is distinctive to world-systems theory is not that it has been around longer than more recent globalization studies. Rather, this paradigm & certainly Wallerstein himself – tends to view globalization not as a recent phenomenon but as virtually synonymous with the birth & spread of world capitalism, circa 1500. Indeed, Wallerstein is credited for having reinvigorated historical sociology. If one of the of the world-system paradigm is its deeply historical focus, it also represents the problematic nature of the paradigm if it is seen as a theory of globalization.

One of the key issues in the globalization debate, & one that cuts to one of the underlying ontological issues in globalization studies, is when does globalization begin? What is the time dimension of the process? How a theory answers this question will shape even determine what we understand when we speak of globalization, or if the term & the process of change in historical structures that the term is assumed to explicate is worthwhile, or simply superfluous and misleading. We can identify three broad approaches to the temporal question of globalization a process that dates back to the dawn of history, with a sudden recent acceleration; a process coterminous with the spread & development of capitalism over the past 500 years & a recent phenomenon associated with social change of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The world-system paradigm clearly argues the second of these. In fact, a number of world-system theorists suggested in the 1990 that to talk of globalization was merely to reinvent the wheel. Wallerstein himself does not see anything new in globalization. 'The proponents of world-systems analysis, states Wallenstein, have been talking about globalization since long before the word was invented not, however, as something new but as something that has been basic to the modern world-system ever since it began in the sixteenth century. My own view, albeit briefly, is that the current period marks a qualitatively new epoch in the ongoing evolution of world capitalism, one that involves certain discontinuities & qualitatively novel dimensions that cannot be explained within the world-systems paradigm. If globalization simply means the only geographic extension of material and cultural exchanges then it has been going on for thousands of years, & if it means the spread & development of capitalism, including that which the capitalist system implies, then it has been going on for 500+ years. In my own conception, I reserve the term globalization to refer to the novel changes associated with the past few decades. These changes involve, to reiterate, qualitatively new dimensions that the world-system paradigm cannot account for given the imminence of its core concepts, as I discuss later, albeit briefly.

World-systems theory shares with several other approaches to globalization, most notably the global capitalism approach with which I myself am identified (Robinson, 2004, 2007), a critique of capitalism as an expansionary system that has come to encompass the entire world over the



past 500 years. These distinct theories share a common genealogy that traces back to Marx & his critique of capitalism, and in turn grew out of a long tradition in Marxist and radical analyses of world capitalism dating back to the writings of Lenin, Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg & other early 20th-century theorists of imperialism (Brewer, 1991; Worsley, 1977). But accounts of world capitalism among radical academics & political actors began to diverge in the post-Second World War period. In particular, more traditionally oriented approaches followed Marx's view that capitalism would develop the forces of production worldwide as it spread, while others saw the backwardness and underdevelopment of some regions of the world as the alter-ego of the advancement & development of others. A number of schools emerged that argued that it was the very nature & dynamics of world capitalism that resulted in global inequalities among countries & regions, bringing about the development of some & the underdevelopment of others. This view was first put forward by the structural school of Raul Prebisch & the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in the 1950s & 1960s, followed by more radical & explicitly neo-Marxist dependency theorists or the 'dependentistas' of the 1960s & 1970s (Chilcote, 1984). At the same time, radical intellectuals & political leaders from other parts of the Third World were reaching similar conclusions, among them, Samir Amin & Walter Rodney, inspired in part by the Latin Americans (Amin, 1974; Rodney, 1981; Worsley, 1977).

It was in this milieu that Wallerstein forged his distinctive world-system theory, as part of a broader intellectual exchange with Amin & others, including Andre Gunder Frank & Terrence Hopkins. Wallerstein had himself lived in France & Africa and began his career as an Africanist (on Wallerstein's intellectual biography, see Goldfrank, 2000). His first major work, *Africa: The Politics of Independence* became an academic bestseller. But what launched the world-system paradigm was the publication in 1974 of the first volume of his Magnus opus, *The Modern World-System*. The first volume, under the subtitle *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, lays out the basic postulates of the theory. It was followed by a second volume in 1980, subtitled *Mercantilism & the Consolidation of the European World Economy, 1600–1750*, & then a third volume in 1988, *The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World Economy, 1730–1840*. Wallerstein is a remarkably prolific writer and has produced dozens of books and hundreds of articles & essays. More recent works have continued to elaborate and refine the world-system paradigm, & to apply it to an array of contemporary and historical phenomena. Other recent works have focused on matters of method, epistemology & ontology of social science, particularly with his call for unification of the disciplines & of history into a historical social science (Wallerstein, 2001, 2004).

If the radical literature on development was one major influence on Wallerstein's ideas, the second was the French Annales school that reached its zenith in the post-Second World War years, and in particular, the thought of its leading figures, Fernand Braudel. Braudel had sought to develop 'total' or 'global' history. By this he meant an approach to history that observes the totality of the field of social forces, so that history is all-embracing & emphasizes the interconnectedness of what conventional approaches consider to be distinct histories. But Braudel also means by 'global history' the synthesis of history and social sciences through an emphasis on the *longue duree* (the long term), what Braudel alternatively referred to as 'structural time' in human affairs. The *longue duree* is a historical process in which all change is slow, involving constant repetition and recurring cycles. It is only through the study of the long term that the totality, the deepest layers of social life, the 'subterranean history', and the continuing structures of historical reality are revealed.

Wallerstein has pushed further this fusion of history & social science, calling for a historical social science that would reunify history with sociology, the other social sciences & the humanities, and that would operate on a global scale. Two of the hallmarks of world-system approaches are the transdisciplinary nature of much research & the deeply historical perspective it brings to bear on research. In 1976, Wallerstein and several of his colleagues established the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems & Civilization at the State University of New York at Binghamton.

### **The modern world-system**

World-system theory as elaborated by Wallerstein starts with the proposition that the appropriate unit of analysis for macrosocial inquiry in the modern world is neither class, nor state/society, or country, but the larger historical system, in which these categories are located. The defining boundaries of a historical system are those within which the system & the people within it are regularly reproduced by means of some kind of ongoing division of labor. Central to the idea of a historical system is the division of labor a core concept in the social sciences. The existence of a division of labor implies specialized work roles among individuals & groups along with the coordination or synchronization of these different roles, or labor activities. Hence, the division of labor naturally forms the outer boundaries of any social order in that it sets the boundaries for and social relations and interdependencies.

In human history, Wallerstein argues, there have been three known forms of historical systems: mini-systems & world-systems of two kinds' world-empires and world economies. Mini-systems largely correspond to the pre-agricultural era. They are self-contained systems that tend to be small in space & brief in time. They are generally subsistence economies, governed by the logic of reciprocity in exchange. Mini-systems were highly homogeneous in terms of cultural & governing structures & they split up when they became too large. World-systems do not exhibit this homogeneity. For Wallerstein, a world-system is an economic entity not circumscribed by political or cultural boundaries, and is a self-contained social system. World-empires were the dominant form of historical systems from the earliest civilizations until about 1500. The defining characteristic is a single political center or structure encompassing an extensive division of labor & a wide range of cultural patterns. World-empires operated through the extraction of tribute, or surplus, from otherwise locally self-administered communities of producers that was passed upward to the center and redistributed to a network of officials. In turn, a world-economy involves vast, uneven chains of integrated production structures brought together through a complex division of labor & extensive commercial exchange. This may be true of a world-empire as well.

For Wallerstein, the boundaries of a world-system are formed by the extent & reach of a given social division of labor. For instance, the Roman Empire was a world-system, in that all of the lands & peoples encompassed within its realms participated in a single empire-wide division of labor, & were connected by specialized regional roles & economic contributions, & trading networks among them. In Wallerstein's own words, a world-system is a 'spatial/temporal zone which cuts across many political & cultural units, one that represents an integrated zone of activity & institutions which obey certain systemic rules. In turn, Wallerstein distinguished between two types of world-systems. One is world-empires, in which there is a single political boundary. Hence the Roman world-system was a world-empire. In distinction, a world-economy is a world-system that has multiple political centers rather than a single political

center or boundary. The peculiar strength of the modern or capitalist world-system is that it has not transformed into a world-empire, which would imply a single political system or center.

The capitalist world-economy that emerged from circa 1500 and on expanded to cover the entire globe, absorbing in the process all existing mini-systems and world-empires, establishing market and production networks that eventually brought all peoples around the world into its logic & into a single worldwide structure. Hence, by the late 19th century there was but one historical system that had come to encompass the entire globe, the capitalist world-system. It is in this sense that world-system theory can be seen as a theory of globalization even if its principal adherents reject the term globalization.

As Wallerstein lays out in Volume I of *The Modern World-System*, the modern world system as a capitalist world-system came into being during the 'long sixteenth century' of 1450–1640 out of the general crisis of European feudalism that began in the 14th century. 'Structures are those coral reefs of human relations which have a stable existence over relatively long periods of time', states Wallerstein. 'But structures too are born, develop, & die the study of social change should be restricted to the study of changes in those phenomena which are most durable' (1974). He then goes on to proclaim two 'great watersheds in the history of man the so-called Neolithic or agricultural revolution. The other great watershed is the creation of the modern world' (1974).

Prior to the creation of this European-centered world-system there were a number of world-economies and world-empires around the planet, including the Mediterranean world-economy, the Indian Ocean–Red Sea complex, the Chinese region, the Central Asian land mass from Mongolia to Russia and the Baltic area, among others (Wallerstein, 1974). But the European world-economy did away with these other world-economies and world-empires through its own expansion. Emerging capitalist elites (merchants, financiers, political elites) from Portugal, later Spain, Holland, England, France & elsewhere, expanded outward in pursuit of new economic opportunities. This expansion was made possible by the development of strong states in the 'core' of the emerging capitalist world-economy. In Western Europe, centralized monarchies replaced feudal fiefs, which were then replaced by modern nation-states. These states defended the interests of their elite classes & played a key role in constructing the structures of the modern world system. They first colonized the Americas & economically incorporated Eastern Europe into a larger single Atlantic world-economy. With each expansion new regions were brought into the system. The system continued to expand, eventually incorporating the entire planet & becoming, between 1815 & 1917, a truly 'global enterprise'. This capitalist world-system is characterized by economic dominance of the planet, not by any single political or cultural system (but see later comments on Wallerstein's notion of geo-culture & my commentary).

### **Structures and processes of the modern world-system**

A key structure of the capitalist world-system becomes the division of the world into three great regions, or hierarchically organized tiers. The first is the core, or the powerful & developed centers of the system, original comprised of Western Europe and later expanded to include the United States & Japan. The second is the periphery those regions that have been forcibly subordinated to the core through colonialism or other means, & in the formative years of the capitalist world-system would include Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Third is the semi-periphery, comprised of those states & regions that were previously in the core

& are moving down in this hierarchy, such as the Iberian countries following their 16th-century heyday, or those that were previously in the periphery and are moving up, such as Italy in earlier centuries, Russia following the Soviet revolution, or more recently, India, China, Brazil, South Africa & such 'Asian Tigers' as South Korea and Taiwan. 'The ability of a particular state to remain in the core sector is not beyond challenge', asserts Wallerstein. 'The hounds are ever to the hares for the position of top dog. Indeed, it may well be that in this kind of system it is not structurally possible to avoid, over a long period of historical time, a circulation of the elites in the sense that the particular country that is dominant at a given time tends to be replaced in this role sooner or later by another country' (1974).

With this trimodal structure involving three distinct regions: center (or core), periphery and semi-periphery, Wallerstein is borrowing from, and expanding on, earlier theories of global political economy. The concept of core and periphery was first developed in the 1950s by Raul Prebisch, the director of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ELCA). Dependency theory posited a bimodal model of core, or metropolitan states that had historically conquered and colonized regions that became satellites, or peripheral areas of world capitalism. But with the addition of the semiperiphery in Wallerstein's construct this bimodal structure becomes trimodal. The semi-periphery is seen as occupying an intermediate place between the core & the periphery. Within the division of labor, the core and the periphery are involved in an unequal exchange of high-wage products (e.g. manufactures) & low-wage products (e.g. raw materials). For its part, the semi-periphery stands in between in terms of its wage levels and the products it trades & seeks to trade in both directions. But for Wallerstein the semi-periphery's role goes beyond a distinct middle position in the international division of labor. It also plays a political role in the system, diverting pressures from the periphery in the same way that a middle class may defuse tensions between workers and capitalists:

The world-system thus has an international division of labor distinguished by core, periphery & semi-periphery, each playing a functionally specific role within the system. But more specifically, Wallerstein terms this an axial division of labor. What he means by this is that core-like (e.g. high-wage, capital-intensity and skill level) & peripheral production processes (e.g. raw material production, low capital-intensity or skill level) are bound together in the world-system & that peripheral production processes are concentrated in a geographic periphery & core production processes are concentrated in a geographic core. The theory's insistence that this axial division of labor must take a geographical/territorial expression has been critiqued by others coming from a globalization perspective. What is crucial with regard to globalization theory is that in Wallerstein's construct the division of labor is necessarily geographical & international, so that different geographical regions and different countries occupy different positions within the world division of labor. In a world-system 'there is extensive division of labor. This division is not merely functional that is, occupational but geographical. That is to say, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world-system' (1974).

A core component of Wallerstein's theory is the generation and appropriation of surpluses throughout this system. Surpluses tend to move from peripheral & semi peripheral to core regions, so that the natural functioning of the system that is, world accumulation results in the enrichment & development of the core & the impoverishment & underdevelopment of the periphery. Here we see how important the concept of the division of labor is to world-system theory. The peripheral regions are consigned to producing raw materials for the world economy while the core industrializes & produces manufactured goods. Thus an international division of

labor and a world trade system is created that favors the core. Here we have a theory that provides an explanation for global inequalities & as many have pointed out, a potent antidote to the modernization theories that proliferated in the 1950s & 1960s.

Another structure immanent to the world-system, according to Wallerstein, is different methods of labor control in different zones of this world-economy. Wage labor developed in the Northwest European 'core' of the system, while coerced forms of labor developed in 'peripheral' zones. In particular, slave labor and what Wallerstein calls 'coerced cash-crop labor' (a form of serfdom in which peasants are forced to produce for the world market) developed in the Americas and in Eastern Europe. Mixed forms of labor control developed in the 'semi-periphery', among them share-cropping and tenant farming. Because the notion of distinct modes of labor control, in particular wage labor in the core and coerced labor in the periphery, is so central to Wallerstein's esp thesis & is contrasted to contrary propositions in other globalization theories, it is worth quoting Wallerstein at some length on the matter.

As mentioned, a world-economy does not have a single political center as does a world-empire; hence the inter-state system becomes another immanent feature of the capitalist world-system. 'Political empires are a primitive means of economic domination', claims Wallerstein. 'It is the social achievement of the modern world, if you will, to have invented the technology that makes it possible to increase the flow of the surplus from the lower strata to the upper strata, from the periphery to the center, from the majority to the minority, by eliminating the "waste: of too cumbersome a political superstructure' (1974). If the world becomes divided into a three-tiered hierarchy of core-semi-periphery-periphery, in turn, the core states are themselves hierarchically organized around 'hegemony'. This hegemony is a leading core state that exercises its political domination & control over the system and imposes rules & norms that bring it disproportionate benefits. There have been a succession of hegemony in the history of the modern world-system, from Spain to the United Provinces of the Netherlands, later Great Britain, & then the United States in the 20th century.

A constant theme in Wallerstein's more recent writings, & in literature from the world-system paradigm more generally, is the decline of US hegemony & a renewed world struggle for hegemonic succession (Arrighi & Silver, 1999). Much conflict in modern world history is seen as wars among core powers over hegemonic status, or wars of conquest by the core over the periphery. Thus world-system theory offers an explanation for international conflict & for such themes as power & balance of forces in the international system. In a capitalist world-economy, states Wallerstein, 'core states are intertwined in a state of constant economic & military tension, competing for the privilege to exploit peripheral areas, & permitting certain entities to play a specialized, intermediary role as semiperipheral powers. In this, Wallerstein is elaborating on the classical theory of imperialism, which saw the inter-state rivalries & conflicts among rich countries as a struggle for control over world markets & colonial sources of labor & raw materials, and in concurrence with a number of related strands in international relations theory.

Two other structural characteristics of the world-system are cyclical rhythms & secular trends in the world-economy as a whole. There are at least two types of cyclical rhythms. One is known as Kondratieff cycles, named after Russian economist Nikolai Kondratieff, who in the 1920s first wrote about these cycles, involving first expansion and then a contraction in the world-economy, lasting some 45–50 years. Beyond world-system theory, most political economists

who study world capitalism have observed & studied these Kondratieff cycles, and most concur with Wallerstein's observation that the last A-phase (the period of expansion) began circa 1945 & ended circa 1972/3, and that the world entered a B-phase in 1972/3 (Mandel, 1978). There is, however, considerable debate over how to interpret the period of stagnation that began in the early 1970s. We cannot visit this debate here other than to note that it is related to globalization insofar as a number of theorists see the economic turmoil of the late 20th century as related to the processes associated with globalization. Wallerstein has taken a particular position in this regard that I discuss later. The second set of cyclical rhythms is what world-systems theorists call 'logistics' cycles, which last approximately 250 years, first identified by Francois Simiand in the 1930s. Wallerstein has argued that a logistics cycle that ran from 1450 to 1750 involved the birth and consolidation of the capitalist world-economy. Meanwhile, some of the secular trends in the world-system are the geographic expansion of the system, increasing commoditization, increasing industrialization and a Weberian bureaucratization. There are a great many areas of particular research and a number of working concepts within the world-system paradigm.

Analyzing late 20th-century developments in the world-system, Wallerstein notes that the expansion of the world-economy since 1945 has probably been as great as for the entire period of 1500–1945, & that the political strength of anti-systemic forces increased dramatically during this period.

Finally, a concept worth mentioning because of its implications for globalization theory is geoculture, as I believe there are both differences and convergences in the interpretations of world-systems theory & the global capitalism approach to the matter of culture in the global or world-system. Again the Braudel Center: We mean by geoculture the cultural framework of the world-system as a whole. The institutionalization of science & knowledge is a major component of the geoculture of the capitalist world-economy. We mean by civilizations those constructs of the present which are claims of a long & particular cultural heritage in a specific region of the world. The boundaries of the 'civilization' are often defined in relation to a religious & linguistic core. The tension between the singular geoculture of the capitalist world-economy & the multiple renewed civilizational claims is a central feature of the politics of the world-economy.

I don't give much weight to versions of globalization that impute explanatory even causal – priority to the dramatic cultural changes worldwide associated with the process, & do not share the criticism that world-systems theory does not accord more causal priority to culture in the shaping of historic structures. However, the accelerated integration of peoples into global social structures and social life brought about by globalization implies a universal cultural transmission & by necessity involves a minimum quotient of shared symbols, adaptive strategies & meaning systems, if social life is to be possible at the global level. The question is, what are the social and class forces in the global system that have the power to diffuse and impose symbols and shape meaning systems. In this regard I do not see countries or regions imposing dominant cultures, as world-systems theory does, but social groups as agents. 'Cultural clashes' in the global capitalism view reflect less that of competing geo-cultural regions than the impacts of global capitalist culture and manifold forms of resistance to it. The cultural impact of the new global capitalism is immense. The cultural icons of Coca Cola, Mickey Mouse, Big Macs, Nike, & so on, are symbolic of the real material domination of transnational corporations. Transnational production chains, by the nature of the activities involved & the networks of people drawn into them facilitate widespread cultural change & promote a

dominant global capitalist culture. To the extent that this global capitalist culture has emanated out from its original heartlands of capitalism culture, based on consumerism, individualism and competition, may well be more flexible & adaptable or from the core in the worldsystem lexicon & continues to do so then there is a geo-cultural & 'civilization' dimension to global capitalist cultural domination. But this global corporate to distinct regional 'geo-cultures' to which Wallerstein refers (Sklair, 2000). Global capitalist cultural hegemony clearly plays an increasingly important role in maintaining the cohesion of the global capitalist order. This is particularly so given the greater cultural cohesion among national elites in the world setting, as their transnational identities overshadow their national ones. The culture and ideology of global capitalism – consumerism, individualism and competition – are less 'western' or 'core' than global capitalist patterns and are imposed as much from within by local contingents of the transnational capitalist class and transnationally oriented elites (see later) as from without by agents from other regions. Conversely, cultural symbols are created and appropriated by the oppressed and culture can and does subvert as much as it dominates. It is in this resistance that groups draw on historical geocultures and adapt them to entirely new circumstances, including rescripting and even mythologizing them.

### **Wallerstein, the world-system & globalization**

Is the world-system approach a theory of globalization or an alternative theory of world society? The answer to this question would, in turn, depend on how we define the contested concept of globalization. If a bare-bones definition is intensified interconnections and interdependencies on a planetary scale and consciousness of them, then certainly world-system theory is a cohesive theory of globalization, organized around a 500+-year time scale corresponding to the rise of a capitalist world-economy in Europe and its spread around the world. On the other hand, however, it is not self-identified as a theory of globalization and is not a theory of the worldwide social changes of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Arrighi has noted, in direct reference to Wallerstein, that not all world-system theorists agree on the affinity of even compatibility between their research program and the emerging globalization studies (2005: 33).

Wallerstein has himself been dismissive of the concept of globalization. 'The current buzz-word to describe the contemporary situation is "globalization". Personally, I think it is meaningless as an analytic concept' (2000). Yet Wallerstein has referred to globalization in two distinct senses. In the first, it is an ideology of dominant groups in reference to the neoliberal political ideology of global free trade & capital accumulation unrestrained by states. Indeed, in this sense, Wallerstein is absolutely correct it is indeed a blatant ideology evoked by ruling groups to justify capitalist globalization policies. At the same time, however, he has dismissed other social scientific conceptions of globalization as simply a new & superfluous term for the same historical processes that world-system theory has been expounding on since the 1970s.

If for the world-system paradigm globalization is synonymous with the birth and spread of capitalism, then how capitalism is defined differs among distinct theories with major implications for our conception of globalization. Most world-system theorists follow Weber in this regard whereas other critical approaches to globalization apply Marx's definition. Weber saw capitalism as a market or exchange relation whereas Marx defined capitalism as a production relation. This distinction is important to the matter of globalization. In the Weberian definition, any production undertaken for exchange on the market for a profit is capitalist. By

this definition, if serfs or slaves grow a crop which the lord or slaver markets, then this constitutes capitalism. Those that follow Marx's definition of capitalism as essentially a production relation between capital and labor would tend to argue that capitalism starting in the 16th century became the dominant mode of production worldwide and that this broader capitalist world economy became 'articulated' for much of the modern period to diverse other modes of production under the hegemony of the capitalist mode (Chilcote and Johnson, 1983; Foster-Carter, 1978). Thus slavery in the Americas was a slave mode, not capitalist, articulated in turn to a larger world capitalist system. And until the latter decades of the 20th century a good portion of the countryside in Latin America was feudal in character even though a portion of agricultural output was sold on the capitalist world market. And industry in Communist China or the former Soviet Union used to be organized through a non-capitalist statist system.

Observing these distinct conceptions of capitalism, Robert Brenner, in a famous critique of Wallerstein, refers to the world-system approach as 'neo-Smithian Marxism' (1977), by which he means a reliance on a definition of capitalism that implicitly derives from the doctrines of Adam Smith. For Smith, the essence of capitalism was the development of the division of labor and the consequent extension of exchanges among producers involved in ever more specialized work. Such an understanding of capitalism based on this functional expansion and development of market relations a 'commercialization model' leads to a view of globalization as a movement in both the intensity and extent of international commercial interactions, whereas a view of capitalism as involving exploitative property relations and the accumulation of capital through the capital-labor production relation will lead to a distinct view of globalization.

How we define capitalism is, therefore, not a matter of mere semantics and gets to the heart of the question posed above: is the world-system approach a theory of globalization or an alternative theory of world society? The market/exchange definition implies that globalization can only be a quantitative intensification of a 500-year-old process, whereas the production definition allows for quantitative change to give way under globalization to qualitative change. Wallerstein and others from the world system paradigm, by virtue of their definition of capitalism, conceive of globalization not as something qualitatively new in the world but as a mere quantitative intensification of connections and systemic exchanges dating back to circa 1500. This is why Wallerstein, Arrighi and others from the paradigm insist that worldwide changes in the late 20th and early 21st centuries can be adequately characterized as simply more of the same and are dismissive of the concept of globalization.

At the same time, a combination of cyclic rhythms and secular trends that define the capitalist world-system, argues Wallerstein, are hitting 'asymptotes'. An asymptote refers to something that is self-intersecting, and in mathematics, refers to a straight line that always approaches but never meets a curve (the asymptote is the 100 percent point). Wallerstein seems to be arguing, therefore, that these cyclical and secular trends are reaching their upper-limits within the logic of the system. Wallerstein then goes on to identify three secular trends that are approaching their asymptotes and creating a structural crisis of capital accumulation in the world-system.

The first asymptote is the trend in the real wage level in the capitalist world-system as a percentage of the costs of production. The curve of the political strength of the working classes has been upward over the *longue durée*, says Wallerstein, leading capitalists to relocate given sectors of production to other zones of the world-economy where average wages are lower. Lower-wage workers, specifically, tend to be newly recruited immigrants from rural areas often



entering the wage-labor market for the first time. But a significant rural sector not yet engaged in wage labor from which capitalists can continue to draw 'is precisely what has been diminishing as a secular trend. The deruralization of the world is on a fast upward curve. It has grown continuously over 500 years, but most dramatically since 1945. It is quite possible to foresee that it will have largely disappeared in another 25 years' (2000).

The second asymptote is the trend in rising costs of material inputs to the capitalist world-system. Although this would appear to be an argument that non-renewable resources are becoming exhausted, Wallerstein actually seems to argue something different, namely that unutilized areas in which to dump waste in the world-system are drying up. Hence, waste disposal becomes a rising cost, which poses ecological limits to world accumulation: 'Eventually there are no more streams to pollute or trees to cut down or at least, there are no more without serious immediate consequences for the health of the biosphere' (2000). What can be done? The costs of a 'vast clean-up campaign & a vast campaign of organic renewal' would either have to be borne by governments via some form of taxes, or by the total internalization by firms of all costs. Taxing capitalists would put pressure on profit margins, as would the internalization by individual firms of their waste disposal & organic renewal costs, while taxing would be a mounting tax burden. There is no 'plausible solution for this social dilemma within the framework of a capitalist world-economy', and hence 'this is the second structural pressure on the accumulation of capital' (2000)

The third asymptote has to do with rising taxation to cover the costs of security, civil bureaucracies & social welfare, this last item often a government 'pay-off' to 'keep the class struggle within limited bounds' (2000). Popular demands for social welfare 'have been made in more and more zones of the world-system with no clear limit in sight' & this 'has meant, has had to mean, steadily rising tax rates in virtually every country, with at most occasional slight reductions' (2000). However, such redistributive taxes interfere with the possibility of accumulating capital, representing the third structural pressure on such accumulation.

Meanwhile, working classes have lost faith in the ability of anti-systemic movements (Communists, social democrats and national liberation movements) due to the inability of these movements where they took power in the post-Second World War period to fulfill their promises. As a result there has been a massive disinvestment in state structures, as the masses of the world, 'having turned towards the states as agents of transformation, have now returned to a more fundamental skepticism about the ability of the states to promote transformation, or even to maintain social order', with a resulting 'world-wide upsurge of anti-statism' (2000).

There are a number of problems in this argument, including a certain inconsistency between its propositions and empirical reality in the late 20th and early 21st century. Anti-statism, it could be argued, has resulted not so much from a withdrawal of working classes from the state but as a result of capitalist dismantling of public sectors, welfare systems and state regulation of the economy. And as Marx and others have analyzed, capitalists constantly seek to replace the human labor element with machinery and technology in the production process, which expands a reserve army of labor and drives down wages. This is a well-documented cyclical process in world capitalism. The secular trend toward rising structural unemployment in the global economy at the turn of the century some one-third of the economically active population worldwide was un- or underemployed (ILO, 1997) – provides a vast pool of cheap labor that offsets the dwindling supply of rural migrants. Under globalization the wage level has gone

down in the core simultaneous to the shift in sectors of production to lower-wage zones. Despite these problems, Wallerstein's thesis on the terminal crisis of the system can be said to provide an explanation for social change in the age of globalization consistent with his own world-system theory.

### **Globalization and world-system theory: Earlier criticisms and recent debates**

The world-systems paradigm has faced criticism on a number of fronts since the 1970s, and more recently, from competing approaches to globalization. Early critics are numerous (but see, *inter alia*, Aronowitz, 1981; Brenner, 1977; Fitzgerald, 1981; Skocpol, 1977; Smith, 1986; Zeitlin, 1984; Zolberg, 1981). These charged the paradigm with a reified concept of the world-system, with teleology and circular reasoning, with neglecting historically specific development at the national level, as well as political contingency, autonomy and agency, and with conflating class and status group and highlighting stratification analysis at the expense of class analysis (So, 1990).

Stratification analysis at the expense of class analysis (So, 1990). Examples of reification, teleology and circular reasoning can certainly be found throughout Wallerstein's *Modern World-System* trilogy and other writings. Wallerstein attributes the distinct character of early European states to each country's distinct role in the international division of labor: 'The different roles [in the division of labor] led to different class structures which led to different politics' (1974). But how did these different roles come about historically? In what appears to be a clear case of circular reasoning, Wallerstein in turn explains this by different class structures and different politics. Wallerstein often refers to states, and even to the world-system, as if they were conscious macro-agents. 'The Netherlands Revolution liberated a force that could sustain the world-system as a system over some difficult years of adjustment, until the English (and the French) were ready to take the steps necessary for its definitive consolidation' (1974), he writes. Passages such as these, suggesting some conscious design on the part of countries as systemic agents, or some teleological necessity for social forces to sustain the world-system, are not uncommon. Skocpol has charged in this regard that there is an underlying functionalist bias in explaining the dynamics of the system over historical time where changes in parts are understood as necessary to the continual operation and reproduction of the whole system (Skocpol, 1977).

In the same vein, Zeitlin charges that Wallerstein 'inverts the real historical process in which these global relations were created. The world economy itself, so it is said, apparently "assigned specific economic roles" within itself to its own "zones," and these "zones" then "used different modes of labor control" and so forth' (Zeitlin, 1984). In other words, historical events are used to explain the origins of the world-system, but these historical events had to happen because the world-system required them to happen, ergo, the world-system originated because of its consequences. Smith refers to this as the 'tyranny of the whole', which assumes that because the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, the parts lead no significant existence separate from the whole, but operate simply in functionally specific ways entirely as a consequence of their place in the world system (Smith, 1986). Events, processes, group-identities, class and state projects are explained by reference to the system as a whole. Actions would seem to become reflexes of systemic imperatives.

It is also important to note that Wallerstein's and the Fernand Braudel Center's pioneering theoretical system has spawned a huge and constantly expanding literature within the world-

system paradigm involving differences & many fruitful debates among the leading senior scholars associated with the paradigm, such as the late Giovanni Arrighi, Terry Boswell & Andre Gunder Frank, as well Christopher Chase-Dunn and Samir Amin. I cannot take up these intra-paradigm debates here, other than a few examples. Chase-Dunn and Hall (1996) have developed a comparative and evolutionary world-systems perspective that shows that pre-agrarian societies were not necessarily the culturally homogeneous mini-systems as they are characterized by Wallerstein but 'multicultural world-systems with their own complex networks of exchange'. Chase-Dunn (1998), among others, argues that the labor of slaves and serfs in the modern capitalist world-system was significantly commodified so as to characterize them as proletarians, and hence as internal to capitalist production (not just exchange) relations in the worldsystem. Frank and Gills (1996) claim that the capitalist world-system dates back not 500 but 5000 years, and Arrighi (1994) places its origin with the 12th- and 13th-century Italian city states, which he considers the first 'hegemony'

Of more concern to me here are recent critiques of world-system theory from other theoretical approaches to globalization, and in particular from the global capitalism approach with which I am closely identified ( e.g. Robinson, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2004, 2007, 2008), and which argues that globalization represents a qualitatively new epoch in the ongoing and open-ended evolution of world capitalism. For world-systemizes, two key questions are: (1) Is there something new going on in the world of the late 20th & early 21st centuries that cannot be adequately explained by world-system theory? (2) In the face of late 20th- & early 21st-century changes, does the system of world capitalism still exhibit the essential structural characteristics, cyclical patterns and secular trends postulated by the theory?

The biggest challenge facing world-system theory in this regard is accounting for transnational processes unfolding under globalization, particularly the construction of a new global production and financial system that is clearly transnational rather than international in nature. Internationalization is seen as involving the extension of economic activities across national boundaries and is essentially a quantitative process which leads to a more extensive geographical pattern of economic activity, whereas transnationalization is qualitatively different from internationalization processes, involving not merely the geographical extension of economic activity across national boundaries but also the transnational fragmentation of these activities & their functional integration (Dicken, 2003; Robinson, 2004). Alongside the emergence since the 1970s of globally mobile transnational capital increasingly divorced from specific countries, an integrated global financial system has replaced the national bank-dominated financial systems of earlier periods. Global financial flows since the 1980s are qualitatively different from earlier international financial flows. Values cross borders seamlessly as the move swiftly often instantaneously through these new transnational or global circuits of accumulation. National economies have been dismantled & then reconstituted as component elements of this new global production and financial system, which is a qualitatively distinct world economic structure from that of previous epochs, when each country had a distinct national economy linked externally to one another through trade & financial flows. This is a shift from international market integration to global productive integration. This conception of changes in recent decades is incompatible with world-systems theory, which sees the world-economy as broken down into distinct & competing national economies bringing together national capitalists and firms with their respective states that the theory posits as immanent and immutable to the capitalist world-system.

I along with a number of other theorists (Cox, 1987; Hoogvelt, 1997; Robinson, 1998, 2003, 2002) have argued that the production & labor processes that are central to the conceptual distinction world-system theory makes among core, semi-periphery & periphery have undergone qualitative transformations and transnationalization in recent decades that render a geographical or territorial conception of core and periphery increasingly outdated. As noted earlier, central to Wallerstein's construct is the international division of labor, which he terms an axial division of labor. What he means by this is that core-like & peripheral-like production processes are bound together in the world-system and that peripheral production-like processes are concentrated in a geographic periphery & core-like processes are concentrated in a geographic core. As we saw earlier, world-system theory insists that this axial division of labor must take not only a geographical/territorial form, but specifically a nation-state form, so that core and periphery by definition are spatially distinct zones in the world-system. These zones are coterminous with particular nation-states characterized as core, semi-peripheral and peripheral states. Wallerstein is very clear in affirming that lower and upper strata in the world take the form of a hierarchy of territorial states. 'States can be viewed as a sort of upward or downward "mobility" of the state as an entity, a movement measured in relation to other states within the framework of the interstate system', he argues (1980). The core– periphery divide as a territorial & specifically as a nation-state divide is imminent to world capitalism and an immutable structure from the world-systems perspective.

I & others have argued that there is a changing relationship between production and geography between space & accumulation under globalization that Wallerstein is ignoring. The social configuration of space is less territorial & certainly the nation-state is only one possible historical form of configuring social space. The transnational geographic dispersal of the full range of world production processes suggests that core and peripheral production & accumulation processes correspond increasingly less to the logic of geography & to specific territorially defined nation-states (Castells, 1996; Cox, 1987, Hoogvelt, 1997, Robinson, 1996, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2008). While in earlier epochs core & periphery referred to specific territories & the populations that resided therein, under globalization these concepts need to be reconceived in social rather than geographic terms, as social location in a global society is increasingly stratified less along national and territorial lines than across transnational social lines.

I have argued, further, that 'nation-state centrism' & 'state structuralism' in world system theory impede the theory's ability to conceptualize the dynamics of globalization (Robinson, 1996, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008). World-system theory takes a national/international approach that views the system of nation-states as an immutable structural feature of the larger world or inter-state system, in contrast to transnational or global approaches that focus on how the system of nation-states and national economies, and so on, are becoming transcended by transnational social forces and institutions grounded in a global system rather than the inter-state system. The world-system is assumed still to be characterized in the current epoch by competitive nation-states as the appropriate subunits of analysis and the competitive inter-state system is an immutable feature. The key actors are rival states operating in an inter-state system, each in competition with all the others to move up the hierarchy of states or preserve their position, so that transnational social relations become subsumed under inter-state relations. This position is justified with the presumption that 21st-century world capitalism is characterized by national capitalist classes and states that defend the competing interests of these respective national groups against each other. For most world-system

analysts, world political dynamics are to be explained by competition and rivalry among these national status groups and their national states. States 'are by definition rivals, bearing responsibility to different sets of rival firms', Wallerstein continues to insist (2004), despite mounting evidence that the transnationalization of capital has advanced considerably so that rival firms tend to be global rather than national corporations housed in particular states (see e.g. Barnett and Cavanagh, 1995; Robinson, 2004).

There are emerging new relationships between the state, classes, institutions & accumulation under globalization that cannot be so easily framed in the territorial, geographical & statist terms posited by world-systems theory. Some globalization theories see the rise of such supranational political & planning agencies as the Trilateral Commission, the World Economic Forum, the Group of Seven & now the Group of 22, & the World Trade Organization as signs of an incipient transnational or global governance structure (Held et al., 1999). I have theorized the emergence of a transnational state apparatus (Robinson, 2001, 2004). For Wallerstein (2000) & most world-system analysts (e.g. Arrighi & Silver, 1999), these agencies are instruments of a US effort to maintain its worldwide political control over potential rivals for hegemony.

The world-system paradigm's approach to hegemony is that a particular hegemonic country's national products outcompete the products of other countries (see, inter alia, Wallerstein, 1980: 38–9). Hegemony in the world-system paradigm, as in much international relations theory, is predicated on this nation-state centric approach that associates hegemony in the world-system with the dominance of a particular country. Most world system analysts, including Wallerstein (2003), see a new round of inter-core rivalry over which state will be the next hegemon in the wake of declining US hegemony. But in the age of globalized production one is hard-pressed to find evidence that supports the notion of each country producing & trading its own national products. The problem of state centric and nation-state centric analysis is that it does not allow us to conceive of an emergent global hegemony in terms of transnational classes & groups not bound to any state or to specific geographies. An alternative view of the struggle for hegemony in the global system sees it not in terms of a dispute among nation-states but in terms of transnational social & class groups & their struggles to develop hegemonic & counter hegemonic projects. I have criticized this nation-state conception of hegemony (Robinson, 2004, 2005, 2008), arguing instead that the 21st century is witness to emergent forms of transnational hegemony by social groups operating through multiple states, through intra & supranational organizations, states and other institutions.

Nation-state centric analyses of inter- & transnational relations fail to appreciate the integrative character of global capitalism. Both Sklair (2000) & I (Robinson, 1996, 2001) have suggested that a new transnational capitalist class has emerged out of fractions of national capitalist classes that have inter-penetrated through numerous mechanisms with such fractions from other countries. The TCC is grounded in the global rather than the inter-state system. It has been attempting to position itself as a new ruling class group worldwide since the 1980s and to bring some coherence and stability to its rule through an emergent TNS apparatus (Robinson, 2004, 2004). In distinction to the world-system perspective, the world politics of this would-be global ruling class is not driven, as it was for national ruling classes, by the flux of shifting national rivalries and alliances played out through the inter-state system but by the new global social structure of accumulation.

### **1.3 The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis. Comparative Studies in Society & History. Sep. 1974. Pp. 387-415**

**Immanuel Wallerstein**

**McGill University**

The growth within the capitalist world-economy of the industrial sector of production, the so-called industrial revolution, was accompanied by a very strong current of thought which defined this change as both a process of organic development and of progress. There were those who considered these economic developments and the concomitant changes in social organization to be some penultimate stage of world development whose final working out was but a matter of time. These included such diverse thinkers as Saint-Simon, Comte, Hegel, Weber, Durkheim. And then there were the critics, most notably Marx, who argued, if you will, that the nineteenth-century present was only an antepenultimate stage of development that the capitalist world was to know a cataclysmic political revolution which would then lead in the fullness of time to a final societal form, in this case the classless society.

One of the great strengths of Marxism was that, being an oppositional and hence critical doctrine, it called attention not merely to the contradictions of the system but also to those of its ideologists, by appealing to the empirical evidence of historical reality which unmasked the irrelevancy of the models proposed for the explanation of the social world. The Marxist critics saw in abstracted models concrete rationalization, and they argued their case fundamentally by pointing to the failure of their opponents to analyze the social whole. As Lukacs put it, "It is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality."

Does Marxism give us a better account of social reality? In principle yes. In practice there are many different, often contradictory, versions extant of "Marxism." But what is more fundamental is the fact that in many countries Marxism is now the official state doctrine. Marxism is no longer exclusively an oppositional doctrine as it was in the nineteenth century. The social fate of official doctrines is that they suffer a constant social pressure toward dogmatism and apologia, difficult although by no means impossible to counteract, and that they thereby often fall into the same intellectual dead end of ahistorical model building.

Nothing illustrates the distortions of ahistorical models of social change better than the dilemmas to which the concept of stages gives rise. If we are to deal with social transformations over long historical time, and if we are to give an explanation of both continuity and transformation, then we must logically divide the long term into segments in order to observe the structural changes from time A to time B. These segments are however not discrete but continuous in reality; ergo they are "stages" in the "development" of a social structure, a development which we determine however not a priori but a posteriori. That is, we cannot predict the future concretely, but we can predict the past. The crucial issue when comparing "stages" is to determine the units of which the "stages" are synchronic portraits (or "ideal types," if you will). And the fundamental error of ahistorical social science (including ahistorical versions of Marxism) is to reify parts of the totality into such units and then to compare these reified structures. For example, we may take modes of disposition of agricultural production, and term them subsistence cropping and cash cropping. We may then see these as entities which are "stages" of a development. We may talk about decisions of groups of peasants to

shift from one to the other. We may describe other partial entities, such as states, as having within them two separate "economies," each based on a different mode of disposition of agricultural production. If we take each of these successive steps, all of which are false steps, we will end up with the misleading concept of the "dual economy," as have many liberal economists dealing with the so-called underdeveloped countries of the world. Marxist scholars have often fallen into exactly the same trap. If we take modes of payment of agricultural labor and contrast a "feudal" mode wherein the laborer is permitted to retain for subsistence a part of his agricultural production with a "capitalist" mode wherein the same laborer turns over the totality of his production to the landowner, receiving part of it back in the form of wages, we may then see these two modes as "stages" of a development. We may talk of the interests of "feudal" landowners in preventing the conversion of their mode of payment to a system of wages. We may then explain the fact that in the twentieth century a partial entity, say a state in Latin America, has not yet industrialized as the consequence of its being dominated by such landlords. If we take each of these successive steps, all of which are false steps, we will end up with the misleading concept of a "state dominated by feudal elements," as though such a thing could possibly exist in a capitalist world-economy.

#### **1.4 The Rise and Future Demise of World-Systems Analysis**

**By: Immanuel Wallerstein (1997) (iwaller@binghamton.edu) (Paper delivered at 91st Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York, Aug. 16, 1996)**

World-systems analysis as an explicit perspective within social science dates from the 1970's, although of course it reflects a point of view that has a long history and builds on much earlier work. It never put itself forward as a branch of sociology or of social science. It did not think of itself as the "sociology of the world," side by side with urban sociology or the sociology of small groups or political sociology. Rather it presented itself as a critique of many of the premises of existing social science, as a mode of what I have called "unthinking social science."

It is for this reason that I, for one, have always resisted using the term "world-systems theory," frequently used to describe what is being argued, especially by non-practitioners, and have insisted on calling our work "world-systems analysis." It is much too early to theorize in any serious way, and when we get to that point it is social science and not world systems that we should be theorizing. I regard the work of the past 20 years and of some years to come as the work of clearing the underbrush, so that we may build a more useful framework for social science.

If world-systems analysis took shape in the 1970's, it was because conditions for its emergence were ripe within the world- system. Let us review what they were. The prime factor can be summarized as the world revolution of 1968 both the events themselves and the underlying conditions that gave rise to the events.

Let us remember the shape of U.S. & world social science of the 1950's & 1960's. The biggest change in world social science in the 25 years after 1945 had been the discovery of the contemporary reality of the Third World. This geopolitical discovery had the effect of undermining the nineteenth-century construction of social science which had created separate theories & disciplines for the study of Europe/North America on the one hand & for that of the rest of the world on the other hand. After 1945, social science became, was forced to become, geographically integrated, so to speak. Thus it became legitimate, but only then, for persons

called sociologists or historians or political scientists to do research on and in Africa or Asia or Latin America.

This was the era of area studies, & area studies changed the social organization of social science, first in the United States & then in most other parts of the world. In seeking to justify itself intellectually, area studies' advocates faced a fundamental epistemological dilemma. They wished to argue that the theories of social science applied to all areas of the world, & not merely to Europe/North America. Previously the theories of the homothetic social sciences had been applied de facto only to what was thought of as the modern "civilized" world, & only Europe/North America was considered as belonging to such a world. In this sense, area studies proposed "universalizing universalism." At the same time, however, proponents of area studies wished to argue that this could not be done simply by applying the generalizations previously developed in Europe/North America to the Third World. Conditions in the Third World, said the area studies people, were quite different. After all, if they had not been different, why would we have needed area studies?

Arguing that conditions are the same and arguing simultaneously that they are different is not the easiest thing to do. However, area studies people came up with a clever, & plausible, solution to the apparent dilemma. They based their work on a view that had already been widespread in the social sciences, to wit, that there exist stages through which society goes & that these stages represent evolutionary progress. Applied to the Third World, this theory was baptized "modernization theory," or developmentalism. Modernization theory argued quite simply the following: All societies go through a defined set of stages in a process ending in modernity. The operational definition of a society was a state, presently in existence as either a sovereign member of the interstate system or a colony destined one day to become a sovereign member. The names of these stages varied among the theorists, but the general idea remained the same. The point of the theorizing was to figure out how states moved from stage to stage, to enable us to indicate at what stage given states presently were, and to help all states arrive at modernity.

The epistemological advantages of the theory were great. All states were the same, insofar as they went through identical stages for identical reasons. But all states were also different, in that they presently were at different stages, & the timing of the movements of each from stage to stage was particular. The political advantages of the theory were great as well. The theory enabled all & sundry to engage in applying the theory to the practical situation by advising governments how best to act to speed up the process of moving upward along the stages. The theory also justified a considerably increased allocation of governmental funds to social scientists, especially to those who claimed to be working on "development."

The limitations of the theory were easy to discern as well. Modernization theory purported to be based on the systematic comparison of independent cases, & this presumed a dubious & totally unproven premise, that each state operated autonomously & was substantially unaffected by factors external to its borders. The theory further presumed a general law of social development (the so-called stages), a process furthermore that was presumed to be progressive, both of which arguments were also undemonstrated. And the theory therefore predicted that those states currently at earlier stages of development could, would & should arrive at an endpoint in which they were essentially clones of whatever was considered by the theorist the model of the most "advanced" state or states.



Politically, the implications were clear. If a state at a so-called lower stage wanted to resemble a state at a so-called advanced stage in terms of prosperity and internal political profile, it had best copy the pattern of the advanced state & implicitly therefore had best follow the advice of that state. In a world defined by the rhetoric of the cold war, this meant that states were adjured by some to follow the model of the U.S. & by others to follow the model of the U.S.S.R. Non-alignment was disqualified by objective scientific analysis.

Of course, these political implications were the object of ferocious refusal by the revolutionaries of 1968. It was an easy jump for them to deny the epistemological premises. This created the atmosphere in which there was receptivity for the kind of protest that world-systems analysis represented. It is important to remember this original intention of world-systems analysis, the protest against modernization theory, if we are to understand the directions in which it has moved since. I see four major thrusts to the work we have done collectively. None of these thrusts has been exclusively the work of persons involved in world-systems analysis per se. But in each case, those involved in world systems analysis have played an important role in pursuing and defining the thrust.

1) The first thrust was globalist. It followed from the famous concern with the unit of analysis, said to be a world- system rather than a society/state. To be sure, modernization theory had been international, in that it insisted on comparing systematically all states. But it had never been global, since it posited no emergent characteristics of a world-system, indeed ever spoke of a world-system at all. World-systems analysis insisted on seeing all parts of the world-system as parts of a "world," the parts being impossible to understand or analyze separately. The characteristics of any given state at T(2) were said to be not the result of some "primordial" characteristic at but rather the outcome of processes of the system, the world-system. This is the meaning of Gunder Frank's famous formula, the "development of underdevelopment."

(2) The second thrust was historicity, & it followed from the first. If the processes were systemic, then the history the entire history of the system was the crucial element in understanding the present state of the system. To be sure, for this purpose one had to make a decision on the temporal boundaries of the systemic processes, & in practice this has been the subject of contentious debate. Nonetheless, the overall thrust was to push analysis away from exclusively contemporary data, or even from data covering only the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century's, in the direction of Braudel's *longue duree*.

(3) The third thrust was "unidisciplinarity," & it followed from the second. If there were historically-emergent and historically-evolving processes in the world-system, what would lead us to assume that these processes could be separated into distinguishable and segregated streams with particular (even opposed) logics? The burden of proof was surely on those who argued the distinctiveness of the economic, political, & socio-cultural arenas. World-systems analysis preferred to insist on seeing "totalities."

(4) The fourth thrust was therefore "holism." This thrust was historico-epistemological, and it followed from all the previous ones. The arguments of world-systems analysis led its advocates to be dubious of, even opposed to, the boundary lines within the social sciences, as they had been historically constructed in the period 1850-1945. These boundaries did not seem to hold water, & thus there was talk of restructuring knowledge. Indeed, holism leads to rethinking as well the historically-constructed and now consecrated great divide between the sciences and the humanities, and perhaps unthinking it as well.

Globalism was not "globalization." As used by most persons in the last ten years, "globalization" refers to some assertedly new, chronologically recent, process in which states are said to be no longer primary units of decision-making, but are now, only now, finding themselves located in a structure in which something called the "world market," a somewhat mystical and surely reified entity, dictates the rules.

Historicity was not "social science history." As used by most persons in the last 25 years, "social science history" refers to the need for persons dealing with past data (so-called historians) to use that data to test social science generalizations derived from the analysis of contemporary data. Social science history is in many ways anti-historical process, and relegates empirical work (especially about the past) to the position of hierarchical subordination to so-called theoretical work. Social science history is compatible with globalization but not with globality.

Unidisciplinarity was not "multidisciplinarity." Multidisciplinarity accepted the legitimacy of the boundaries of the social sciences, but asked the various practitioners to read and use each other's findings, in an additive fashion. It was the belief that more cooks often improve the broth. It resisted the study of totalities on the grounds that it is hard to specify the data in ways amenable to testable propositions and therefore encouraged vague and nondiprovable argumentation.

And finally, holism was not a rehash of "general education." General education had accepted the basic premises of the modern divisioning of knowledge into three super domains: the natural sciences, the humanities, & the social sciences. General education was the case for making all scholars (and indeed all educated persons) sensitive to the premises underlying each of the separate domains. Holism asks whether the super domains are in fact different kinds of knowledge, or ought to be thought of in this way. This debate is directly relevant to the crucial question of the relation of the quest for the true and the quest for the good.

If I have emphasized not only what the thrusts of world- systems analysis have been but also what they have not been, it is because we are running the danger of success. It is because of the strength, and not the weakness, of our efforts that our terminology is in the process of being appropriated for other, indeed opposite, purposes. This can cause serious confusion in the general scholarly public, and even worse, may lead to confusion on our own part, thus undermining our ability to pursue the tasks we have set ourselves.

I have in my title used the phrase, "rise and future demise of world-systems analysis." So far, I have talked only about the rise. Wherein do I see demise? The demise of a movement, and world-systems analysis has been essentially a movement within contemporary social science, derives from its contradictions and from the eventual exhaustion of its utility. We are not there yet, but we are clearly moving in the direction of such a demise, or if you will permit my prejudices, a bifurcation. What are the contradictions of world-systems analysis?

1.The first is that world-systems analysis is precisely not a theory or a mode of theorizing, but a perspective and a critique of other perspectives. It is a very powerful critique, & I personally believe the critique is devastating for a large number of the premises on which much of social science presently operates. Critiques are destructive; they intend to be. They tear down, but they do not by themselves build up. I called this earlier the process of clearing the underbrush. Once one has cleared the underbrush, however, one only has a clearing; not a new construction but only the possibility of building one.

2. There is a second problem with critiques, especially critiques that are past the moment of initial shock & vigor. Critiques are not that difficult to pseudo-co-opt. I have tried already to indicate the ways in which our terminology, or something close to it, is being used for purposes other than we had in mind, which then can have the effect of corrupting what we ourselves do. So then this becomes a question of "physician, heal thyself." But I am making more than a general admonition always to be self-critical. I am suggesting that there is a tendency to forget our own original critical stance, as we hail those who seem to be emulating us, & that this tendency poses considerable risks both to the critical task & to the putative task of reconstruction. At the end of the road, we risk finding ourselves in the situation of so many intellectual movements, a name that has become a shell.

3) We have shifted over the years from criticizing the ways in which we analyze the contemporary situation in peripheral zones of the world-economy to criticizing the ways in which the history of the modern world has been written, to criticizing the theories that are supposed to explain the modern world-system, to criticizing the methodologies used in the historical social sciences, to criticizing the ways in which knowledge institutions have been constructed. We have been following the paths of our critiques & of answering those who have in turn been critical of our work. It is as though we have been going through doors to find other doors behind them, in a constant regress. Perhaps the problem is deeper than we have imagined. Perhaps the problem is the entire thought-system of the capitalist world-economy. This has been suggested, to be sure, by the so-called post-modernists. I am sympathetic to many of their. However, I find them on the whole neither sufficiently "post"-modern nor sufficiently reconstructive.

To be a movement within social science had, and has, certain distinct advantages. It enables us to group forces, to clarify our critiques, and to sustain each other in a sometimes hostile environment. On the whole, I give us good marks for how we have conducted ourselves. On the one hand, we have allowed multiple views to co-exist, and thus avoided becoming a sect. On the other hand, we have not defined our program so loosely that it has lacked critical teeth, which is what would have happened if we had followed the recurrent suggestions that we rename ourselves "the sociology of development," or "political economy," or "global sociology."

Nonetheless, being a movement has certain distinct disadvantages. I am often appalled by the two-line summaries of our perspective one can find in the books of others who have manifestly read virtually nothing of what we have written. I am equally appalled by the suavity with which our research findings are appropriated not only without credit but even more important without any integration of the underlying approach that gave rise to the research findings. This is in part inevitable, since movements tend to talk to themselves & after a while this constrains radically their impact. There is of course an alternative road we might follow that might overcome the limitations of being an intellectual movement. That road is that of moving into the very center of social science, not as a movement but as consensual premise. How might we do that?

The facetious answer would be that we should be writing, or some of us should be writing, general textbooks for first-year students of social science. The real answer is that persons involved in world-systems analysis should be addressing, and addressing urgently, some very fundamental questions, questions that in my view can only be satisfactorily addressed if one has unthought nineteenth-century social science and structures of knowledge and thoroughly absorbed the lessons of world-systems analysis.

**Allow me to list some of these fundamental questions:**

- 1) What is the nature of the distinctive arena of knowledge we may call social science, if there is one? How do we define its parameters and social role? In particular, in what ways, if any, is such a field to be distinguished from the humanities on the one side and the natural sciences on the other?
- 2) What is the relation, theoretically, between social science and social movements? between social science & power structures?
- 3) Are there multiple kinds of social systems (I would prefer the concept, historical systems), and, if so, what are the defining features that distinguish them?
- 4) Do such historical systems have a natural history or not? If so, can this history be called an evolutionary history?
- 5) How is Time Space socially constructed, & what differences does this make for the conceptualizations underlying social science activity?
- 6) What are the processes of transition from one historical system to another? What kinds of metaphors are plausible: self- organization, creativity & order out of chaos?
- 7) What is the theoretical relation between the quest for truth & the quest for a just society?
- 8) How can we conceive our existing historical system (world-system)? And what can we say about its rise, its structure, & its future demise, in the light of our answers to the other questions?

As you can see, the last is the question with which we started. A number of the other questions have been worrying various persons who consider themselves part of the network of scholars involved in world-systems analysis. Furthermore, of course, many other scholars, present and past, have worried about these questions, or at least some of them. The point however is to see that these questions are interrelated, and can really only be answered in relation to each other, that is, from a world- systems perspective.

The other point is that world-systems analysts are, on the whole, , better trained than most social scientists today to address these questions as an interrelated set. When we do begin to address them in this way, we shall no longer be acting primarily as a movement within social science, but we shall be laying claim to formulating the central questions of the enterprise. Is this hybrid? Not really. As world-systems analysts, we know that intellectual activities are not simply a matter of intelligence or will but of social timing, in terms of the world-system. It is because the historical system in which we live is in terminal crisis that there exists the chance of addressing these questions in ways that can make possible substantively rational social constructions. This was not a possibility available to nineteenth-century scholars, however insightful or masterly they were. It is because the legitimacy of the hierarchies that are fundamental to the capitalist world-economy hierarchies of class, of race, of gender are being fundamentally challenged, both politically & intellectually that it may be possible to construct, for the first time, a more inclusive & relatively more objective social science.